

**When is 'Then' and What is 'Perfect'?**

Pastor Ken Sistrunk

**I Corinthians 13:8-13** <sup>8</sup>Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be restrained; where there is knowledge, it will be dismissed. <sup>9</sup>For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup>but when the perfect comes, the partial passes away. <sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I set aside childish ways. <sup>12</sup>Now we see but a dim reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. <sup>13</sup>And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love. (BSB)

**Intro:**

**Cessation-alism:** The belief that nothing supernatural exists. The New Testament writers describe things in terms of supernatural but there is a rational, reasonable explanation for all miracles, signs and wonders. Salvation is found in obeying biblical truths.

**Sensationalism:** The belief that everything has a supernatural cause. The weirder the better!

**I. Here are the key truths in this passage.**

- A.** The words “**perfect**” and “**partial**” in verse 10 and the words “**now**” and “**then**” in verses 12-13 are key in understanding this passage. There are two interpretations.
  - 1.** These two sets of words refer to the age of the **Apostles** and to us now who have the **written** word of God.
  - 2.** These two sets of words refer to now and to when we are **perfected** in heaven.
- B.** A prophecy is a **message** from God. There are two types of prophecy: **foretelling** and **forthtelling**. Prophecy can be done without a specific gift of prophecy by speaking God’s written word into another’s situation. There is still a gift in which this comes easier to one who has this specific gift.
- C.** A tongue is a **hidden** message that will not be understandable unless another person speaks that particular language or if another person has the gift of interpretation of tongues.
- D.** A gift of **knowledge** is the ability to know things that no one should know. This can be secret things that have not been revealed to others. This ability also helps one to understand Scripture better.
- E.** Faith, Hope and Love will endure even in **Heaven**. Love is the greatest of these. V. 13

## II. How can we apply these truths?

- A. We shouldn't seek the gifts but seek the **love of God**. It is ok to desire the greater gifts, especially prophecy. **I Corinthians 14:1** Earnestly pursue love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. (BSB)
- B. Do not **judge** other Christians in their claims of having particular gifts. God is the **judge**. We can encourage the biblical use of their gifts and we can encourage them to exercise them with godly character.
- C. We should all desire to speak the **truth** of God's word into people's lives.
- D. Love has got to be our **standard** for the use of Biblical truth. The Bible should never be used to destroy people.